UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
16th meeting
held on
Monday, 25 October 1993
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. KUKAN	(Slovakia)
later:	Mrs. AL-HAMAMI (Vice-Chairman)	(Yemen)
later:	Mr. KUKAN (Chairman)	(Slovakia)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 109: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of the publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/48/SR.16
26 November 1993
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

93-81825 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 109: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/48/3 (chap. VII.D), A/48/24, A/48/56-E/1993/6, A/48/207, A/48/289, A/48/291, A/48/293, A/48/359, A/48/462, A/48/476 and A/48/484; E/1993/50/Rev.1; A/C.3/48/L.2, L.3 and L.4)

1. Mrs. MBELLA NGOMBA (Cameroon) said that events since the end of the cold war had made social imperatives for development once again the focus of international cooperation.

2. Where conditions undermining the ability of a number of nations to make a meaningful contribution to global development were concerned, the numbers spoke for themselves: during the past year, some 500,000 children under five had died as a result of wars or famine in Eastern Europe and the Horn of Africa. According to UNICEF, malnutrition, disease and poverty claimed about 35,000 young lives daily. By the end of the millennium, the number of elderly persons would reach 1.2 billion. Given that one person in ten would then be elderly, a situation without historical precedent, the need to afford that segment of the population a greater role in society was now recognized.

3. In addition to the aforementioned factors, rising unemployment and deteriorating living conditions were a constant threat to development. In that regard, the Secretary-General had noted recently, on World Habitat Day, that the existence of 1 million homeless people in the world was incompatible with the concept of sustainable development. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had linked human settlements with environmental protection and sustainable development through the adoption of Agenda 21, which emphasized improving the quality of life in both urban and rural areas.

4. The developing countries, including the African nations, were subjected also to the burden of external forces, such as unfavourable terms of trade and debt servicing, which deprived them of resources needed to implement and monitor social programmes. Lack of resources also limited activities at the international level: thus, for the 1992-1993 biennium, the regular programme budget of the former Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat was merely $2,735,700, of which 37 per cent was allocated to programmes for the ageing and 63 per cent went to programmes for youth and disabled persons.

5. Given the scope of the problems at the national and international levels, her delegation welcomed the establishment of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, as part of the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the Secretariat. It was hoped that the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department would place long overdue priority on social issues and their linkage to global development. It supported strengthening the Commission for Social Development which, over the years, had significantly contributed to sensitizing the international community and mobilizing its support for programmes for the most vulnerable groups of the population (the disabled, youth and the elderly) and for the protection of the

(Mrs. Mbella Ngomba, Cameroon)

family. In that regard, greater attention should be given to disabled women, who thus far had been marginalized.

6. She welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal, contained in his report on the work of the Organization (A/48/1), to set out the United Nations approach to development in full in "An agenda for development", a preliminary report which would be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. Her delegation hoped that the agenda for development would define the social and economic dimensions of global peace and security and would set the guidelines for future United Nations action in the economic and social fields, which should be at the centre of all development efforts.

7. Her delegation recommended the adoption of the standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities, whose consideration would be one of the highlights of the forty-eighth session and would afford States the opportunity to make a strong moral and political commitment to a social group which had been kept from progressing by other people's ignorance, neglect and superstition. It supported the appointment of a special rapporteur to monitor the implementation of the standard rules and believed that the work of the rapporteur should be financed from the regular budget. Her delegation also endorsed the proposal to create one or more positions of interregional adviser to provide direct services to States, particularly to the developing countries.

8. The international community needed to develop a long-term strategy to advance the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons to the year 2000 and beyond. Her delegation appreciated the work accomplished by the group of experts, which had met in Vancouver in 1992 to devise that strategy, and urged States to contribute by making their views known.

9. Her delegation supported the drafting of a world youth programme of action to the year 2000 and beyond and endorsed the request to the Secretary-General to continue the preparation of that draft and to Member States and concerned non-governmental organizations to prepare national programmes of action in anticipation of the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year in 1995.

10. Her delegation also endorsed the idea of linking the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year to the celebration of the International Year of the Family, to be launched in December 1993, and it commended the efforts of the Coordinator of the International Year of the Family for sensitizing and mobilizing public opinion to that effect.

11. With regard to the elderly, her delegation continued to endorse the International Plan of Action on Ageing, adopted in 1982, the Proclamation on Ageing and the United Nations Principles for Older Persons, adopted in 1991 to encourage Governments to include measures for older persons in their development programmes. In that regard, global targets on ageing for the year 2001 should be mentioned as they would generate the support of international cooperation when setting national objectives and implementing community-based programmes.

(Mrs. Mbella Ngomba, Cameroon)

12. The deterioration of living conditions throughout the world should force the international community to seek new approaches. That was why her delegation fully supported the current efforts aimed at convening a World Summit for Social Development in 1995 in Copenhagen, the preparatory process of which had been described by Mr. Somavia. It was essential to ensure that the developing countries fully participated in the Summit and its preparation, to establish national committees to that end, to mobilize the necessary resources to fund related activities and to allocate a large portion of those necessary resources from the regular budget, as had been done for similar conferences.

13. Her delegation also supported the efforts of the Department of Public Information to heighten awareness of the core issues of the Summit and hoped that the participation of non-governmental and local organizations would be encouraged throughout the preparatory phase. Her country would continue to fulfil its responsibilities as a member of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee of the Summit.

14. Mr. MUJICA (Cuba) said that, ever since the adoption of resolution 47/92 on the convening of a world summit for social development, the social dimension of development had been a core concern of the international community. Having long been the guinea-pig of economic and political institutions and authorities which controlled their existence in the name of abstract theories and reduced them to the rank of mere statistics, human beings must once again become both subject and object of the development process.

15. In future, economic policies and models would have to be evaluated in terms of their ability to respond to the material and spiritual needs of the population as a whole. That principle, which was of crucial importance for peace, democracy and respect for human rights, must be applied to both national policies and international development strategies. At the dawn of the new millennium, the relevance of models and strategies that perpetuated, at both the national and the international levels, the injustices associated with so many of the social ills afflicting mankind should be called into question.

16. Any system which bore the seeds of glaring inequality and injustice could not be considered effective. The degree of wealth attained by a country, its economic growth rate and the extent to which its institutions were democratized mattered little when racial discrimination and xenophobia prevailed, when millions of human beings were jobless and homeless and could not satisfy their hunger, when millions of children were subjected to cruel exploitation in rural areas, in factories or in the lucrative businesses of child pornography and prostitution, or when others were sold illegally for adoption or even for the removal of their vital organs.

17. In that context, Cuba intended to participate actively in the preparatory process of the World Summit for Social Development, which would afford the international community an opportunity to consider from a fresh perspective the true causes of the deplorable social situation in the contemporary world and take bold action. The Summit must not be characterized by the usual series of negative observations with no real effort to communicate. States must attend it in a constructive spirit, with the political will to achieve tangible results.

(Mr. Mujica, Cuba)

18. Appropriately, the principal themes of the Summit would be the reduction of poverty, the expansion of productive employment and social integration. At the national level, those three objectives could be attained by correcting the imbalances arising from an irrational international economic order and eliminating growing disparities between a wealthy North and an impoverished South. The huge social cost of those imbalances manifested itself in hunger, illiteracy, lack of hygiene, the abandonment of children, unemployment, a high mortality rate and the persistence of curable diseases, including fresh outbreaks of malaria and cholera in Africa and Latin America, respectively.

19. In his delegation's view, neo-liberal policies had made the objective of social equality even more unattainable, aggravated the economic crisis and undermined the social, political and cultural structures of States, thus paving the way for social unrest.

20. That was illustrated by the fact that, in the industrialized and developing countries alike, the recession had had severe social repercussions. High rates of unemployment and the growing marginalization of vast segments of the population gave rise to various alarming phenomena: ethnic conflicts, racial confrontation, xenophobia, neo-Fascist acts of violence. Such was the consequence of strategies, models and policies which, because they had not accorded human beings the place they deserved, had delayed the very social development they had loudly claimed to promote.

21. Action based on human justice and solidarity must be launched. It should encourage cooperation between States and receive assistance from the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, on the understanding that, the granting of such assistance to the developing world must not be subject to unfair conditions which further aggravated social problems. With a view to meeting current and future challenges, the social and economic sector must also be promoted within the United Nations system.

22. It was regrettable that the 1993 Report on the World Social Situation (E/1993/50) had fallen short of the expectations of many delegations, including his own, in that it was no more than a compilation of data provided by other entities. Future analyses should be more detailed and carried out more independently.

23. More than 30 years earlier, Cuba had chosen a development model that could satisfy the material and spiritual needs of its population on the basis of a just and equitable distribution of wealth. Thus, with a per capita income ten times lower than that of the seven most industrialized countries, Cuba managed to do as well, if not better, than those countries in the areas of health and education. Not only had that development model made it possible to respond to basic needs in the areas of health, food, employment and cultural development, but it had also encouraged social freedom and political democracy through large-scale popular participation.

24. The soundness of the Cuban undertaking lay precisely in its social effectiveness, which was currently being put to the test by the severe impact of the international economic crisis on the underdeveloped world and, in the

(Mr. Mujica, Cuba)

specific case of Cuba, by that criminal, unjust and illegal measure, namely, the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against it.

25. Having proved that social development could anticipate economic development and even be the driving force behind it, Cuba pinned its hopes on the World Summit for Social Development and fervently desired its success.

26. Ms. KNUDSEN (Norway), stressing the importance of the United Nations instruments on disabled persons - the World Programme of Action, the framework for a long-term strategy, the standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities - noted that the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons had not yielded the hoped-for results. That meant that the effort already under way must be pursued until such time as the objectives fixed had been fully attained. She recalled that, while the United Nations could facilitate progress, States were primarily responsible for ensuring equal opportunities for all. To that end, all Governments should establish national committees which included representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities, as set forth in rule 17 of the standard rules.

27. Norway's Plan of Action for the Disabled was coming to an end but would be revised for the period 1994-1997. It set general policy objectives and also contained about 90 specific measures for which various ministries were responsible. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs regularly reviewed the Plan of Action, and its implementation was also monitored by the State Council for the Disabled.

28. The Winter Olympic Games of 1994 would take place in Lillehammer, Norway, and would be followed by the Winter Games for the Disabled. The municipality intended to make the town more accessible to disabled persons at that time.

29. Ageing persons also benefited from the measures taken for the fuller integration of disabled persons into society. In Norway, every possible effort was being made to facilitate the participation of the elderly in decision-making and leisure activities. Generally speaking, an effort was being made to ensure that the community responded as best it could to the needs of all and that no one was excluded. Norway hoped that the question of the living conditions of people with disabilities would be included in the agenda of the Summit to be held in Copenhagen in 1995. It also hoped that the specific needs of disabled women would be included in the agenda of the World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in 1995.

30. In conclusion, it was essential to continue efforts at the international level to promote the integration of disabled persons and to ensure the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, which were not binding. The envisaged monitoring system should help to attain that objective. The social integration of disabled persons should be enriching for society as a whole and for each of its members.

31. Mrs. PAMPHILOVA (Russian Federation) said that the changes that had taken place in Eastern Europe had erected serious obstacles to social development. Russia was in full agreement with the conclusions of the thirty-fourth Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Social Affairs, in that the

(Mrs. Pamphilova, Russian Federation)

success of economic reform depended on the existence of an effective social welfare system, in conformity with international standards.

32. The inclusion in the agenda of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development of an item on assistance to countries in transition would demonstrate the willingness of the international community to assist those countries to solve their social problems and would affirm its solidarity in that regard. Technical assistance furnished in a timely manner, or in other words, immediately, to the countries of Eastern Europe, including the Russian Federation, would enable that region of the world to recover its equilibrium.

33. In Russia, the liberalization of prices, the elimination of central planning and the introduction of a new fiscal regime, among other changes, had been accompanied by a considerable drop in purchasing power. The standard of living had continued to decline. Unfortunately, the Government had not been in a position to absorb the shock of those economic changes, notwithstanding the measures it had undertaken in the social sector. Inflation was such that it had become necessary to periodically review pensions and other benefits, which had not, however, offset the drop in purchasing power. Under such conditions, people had lost confidence in the future, particularly since the situation was changing very fast, perhaps too fast for people to adjust to.

34. The tragic events of the previous October in Moscow should be examined in that light. The social consequences of the reforms must also be taken into consideration. Opposition to those reforms on the part of a segment of the population was not so much attributable to ideological considerations as to the deprivations caused by the new system. By all accounts, the economic reforms had not been a panacea.

35. Various parallel phenomena existed currently in Russia. Along with the decline in the standard of living of most people, the increasing income gap should be mentioned. In 1991, the ratio between the lowest and the highest incomes had been 1 to 2. Currently that ratio stood at 1 to 7 1/2. The poor regions had become poorer and the rich regions richer. Also significant was the fact that families with children were particularly hard hit. Furthermore, those who belonged to the most productive sectors, such as management, were, paradoxically, the lowest paid. The result had been a "brain drain" and a nationwide decline in intellectual potential. Those were the kinds of problems that needed to be resolved without delay. There was also unemployment, which affected professional women in particular.

36. In such an environment, it should come as no surprise that new forms of social service and new, autonomous social welfare systems had developed, drawing on the active participation of citizens.

37. With regard to social policies, the priorities were as follows: to stabilize the standard of living, curtail unemployment, guarantee a minimum wage, help the working population to adapt to the new market conditions, and provide social welfare and housing for all members of the population.

38. With regard to policy on disabled persons, the Government had begun to draft a set of laws, including a social assistance system which took into

(Mrs. Pamphilova, Russian Federation)

account standards set by the United Nations. The implementation of that legislation had been delayed, however, by the shortage of resources.

39. Measures had been taken in the Russian Federation with regard to the International Year of the Family. The Government had drawn up a national plan for children, which incorporated the principles of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children. A service to benefit large families had also been instituted.

40. Currently, however, owing to the circumstances, the social welfare system was limping along. Aware that no alternative existed, the population was amenable to reforms, provided that the latter were reasonable.

41. It was to be hoped that the World Summit for Social Development would provide an opportunity for exploring new forms of international cooperation to deal with social problems, which affected every country in the world.

42. Ms. REIKO AOKI (Japan) stressed that social development and economic development had to go hand in hand. In Japan, quality of life was not a political slogan but a goal shared by all sectors of society. Her delegation thus applauded the convening of the World Summit for Social Development to be held in Copenhagen in 1995. The Summit was the ideal occasion to review the achievements of the United Nations since the adoption in 1969 of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, and to ponder prospects for the future at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Her delegation hoped that, in its examination of the three core issues selected - poverty, employment and social integration - the Summit would stress the security of the individual over that of the State. Solidarity among developed and developing countries would also be key to its success. It should be planned in a pragmatic manner, in accordance with the ideas set forth in the Consensus of Dakar, so as to avoid flights of empty rhetoric.

43. Emphasizing the value of the International Plan of Action on Aging, she observed that ageing was quickly becoming one of the most serious problems of modern societies. In 1993, 13.5 per cent of the Japanese were over the age of 65, and that ratio was likely to reach 25 per cent by the year 2021. Japan had a national plan of action - the Gold Plan for the Elderly - which was designed to improve the quality of life for the members of that group. Rather than exclude older persons, society should put their experience and wisdom to use. An international exchange of information and experience might prove useful in that regard.

44. Japan commended the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. As the Secretary-General had stated in his report on the Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (A/48/462, para. 2), the major challenge of the post-Decade era would be to adopt activities with direct benefits to persons with disabilities. Japan was committed to achieving the objectives of the Decade and felt that its labours should be prolonged until the objectives of the World Programme of Action were fully realized. In 1982, Japan had formulated long-term programmes, followed, in 1987, by the establishment of priority goals for the second half of the

(Ms. Reiko Aoki, Japan)

Decade. Those programmes had been revised in 1993 for the period following the Decade; their aim was to upgrade education and training for disabled persons, to create jobs for them, to enhance their welfare and living environment, to afford them increased access to shopping, cultural, recreational and sports facilities, and to foster international cooperation for those purposes. Japan was one of the sponsors of the proposal to establish an Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons.

45. In view of the importance of the family, the basic unit in society, full account must be taken in the International Year of the Family of the need both to respect human rights, and to reflect the diverse forms that families took and the changing patterns of family life. Japan supported the proposal that inter-agency meetings should be held in order to ensure the cooperation that was vital for the success of the Year.

46. Social development was a goal that must be pursued everywhere in the world in order to create conditions that would allow all people, including the elderly and the handicapped, to enjoy an equal right to health and security and to participate appropriately in society; that was why her Government would participate actively in the preparations for the World Summit for Social Development.

47. Mr. ABDULLAH (India) said that over the centuries his country had managed to preserve its rich diversity and to blend, particularly since independence, the traditional and the modern. In that connection, the Indian experience was of significant relevance to the international community.

48. India had a large number of scheduled castes and tribes whose members, for historical reasons, had been identified as socially disadvantaged. Under the Indian Constitution, however, they had the right to be represented in the decision-making machinery of the State, on Government bodies and in public-sector employment. The fundamental rights of the minorities of India were also enshrined in the Constitution, including the right to have their own educational institutions. The State ensured that there was no discrimination against minorities. Moreover, a National Commission for the Minorities had been established by an Act of Parliament to safeguard the rights granted to the minorities under the Constitution and in the legislation.

49. India had made significant progress in integrating women into development through legislation and administrative measures. The status of women had improved significantly over the past 20 years. The Government had sought to help women realize their full potential through training programmes and the creation of new economic activities.

50. In 1977 and 1978, India had established the largest programme in the world for the holistic development of the child. That programme was known as the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS).

51. The right to development was a fundamental right. A society that aimed at protecting the rights of individuals, their dignity and freedom must also promote their economic well-being. That was why India had successfully

(Mr. Abdullah, India)

implemented, since its independence, one of the largest affirmative action programmes in the world. That success had been highlighted in the 1993 Report on the World Social Situation. Attaching conditionalities to aid impinged on the sovereignty of States and politicizing the system of aid in general defeated the common objectives of all, namely, fighting want, hunger, disease and illiteracy.

52. The primary lesson that India had learned in its fight against poverty was that poverty was a complex problem for which there was no single solution. In India, the successful poverty eradication programmes were those that were self-sustaining. The Government took a lead role in poverty alleviation programmes, which consisted of initiating legislation for land reform, decentralizing power, guaranteeing the participation of women and socially vulnerable groups and providing the financial resources needed for anti-poverty programmes. In general, human development was the ultimate goal of the Eighth Plan of India. With that objective in mind, the Government had identified the following measures: employment generation, population control, literacy, education, health, drinking-water supply and food. Since it knew by experience that such programmes were cost-effective only with the participation of the people, the Government planned to involve communities in the implementation of the Eighth Five-Year Plan. It had noticed that successful models of people's institutions were those that were managed by the beneficiaries, were accountable to the community, were self-sustaining, interacted with other organizations in the area and generally tended to increase the integration of various segments of society. The Government, for its part, facilitated the involvement of people in developmental activities by creating the right type of infrastructure, especially in rural areas.

53. Concerning the preparations for the World Summit for Social Development, in which India intended to participate actively, certain basic concerns of developing countries needed to be stressed, in particular the need for genuine cooperation among countries. In that connection, external conditionalities were counterproductive. Similarly, it was important for developing countries not to become victims of increasingly protectionist policies. The international community must facilitate the transfer of technology and resources to developing countries on concessional terms.

54. The International Year of the Family and the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons provided ample opportunities for Member States to share experiences in those areas. The allocation of appropriate resources towards programmes for disabled persons was particularly necessary. South Asia had benefited in that regard from regional cooperation and from the assistance of non-governmental organizations. As the twentieth century drew to a close and the world stood on the threshold of a new millennium, the time had come to start afresh. The year of the World Summit, 1995, should mark such a beginning.

55. Mrs. ENKHTSETSEG (Mongolia) said that despite changes in the world political climate, the socio-economic situation of the world remained a cause for concern as indicated by the 1993 Report on the World Social Situation and the report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near

(Mrs. Enkhtsetseg, Mongolia)

Future (A/48/56). Moreover, the world was facing new security threats. There could be no peace and security without development. It was now acknowledged that development was not limited to economic growth but encompassed also political, social and ecological aspects and that the true measure of development was the well-being of people. That was why Mongolia had co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 47/92 on the convening of a World Summit for Social Development.

56. Her delegation welcomed the fact that the regional commissions were already actively engaged in preparations for that Summit. Her Government fully endorsed the multisectoral strategy to the year 2000 and beyond adopted by ESCAP in 1992 with the aim of improving the economic and social life of the people of the region through the eradication of poverty, equitable distribution of resources and popular participation. It attached great importance to the two ministerial conferences - one on women and development and the other in preparation for the World Summit - to be held in the Asia-Pacific region during 1994, and it intended to take an active part in them. Her Government welcomed the decision of the Preparatory Committee to establish national committees in each country composed of representatives of official agencies and non-governmental organizations.

57. The transition to a market economy was not without serious social problems from which vulnerable groups, especially the disabled, were the first to suffer. Although it was true that the responsibility for designing and executing programmes for the disabled lay first and foremost with the Government, Mongolia was still in need of advice and technical assistance from the donor community, and was willing to cooperate with it in improving the living standard of its disabled people.

58. Mongolia gave its full support to the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. It hoped that the momentum gained during the United Nations Decade for Disabled Persons would be maintained and would result in practical actions with a view to building a society for all.

59. Mr. FARHADI (Afghanistan) said that his delegation commended the achievements of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development. His delegation noted with satisfaction that non-governmental organizations had been involved in those preparations, which was especially encouraging. In many cases, non-governmental organizations were particularly well-informed on the situation in developing countries. Often, they were the real experts on the subject, especially on the least developed countries. With regard to the World Summit, he hoped that a mechanism would be established to ensure effective follow-up. The Copenhagen Summit must not result in a declaration that was destined to be ignored.

60. In his opinion, the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities did not truly reflect the breadth of the problems faced in that area, especially in the least developed countries. His delegation intended to propose some changes at the appropriate time.

61. From what some delegations had said regarding the United Nations Decade for Disabled Persons launched in 1982, it would seem that nothing had really been

(Mr. Farhadi, Afghanistan)

accomplished. He did not share that view: what had occurred during that Decade, most unfortunately, was an increase in the number of disabled persons in the world, particularly in Afghanistan. In that country, bombing and anti-personnel mines had created conditions far worse than those experienced in many European countries at the end of the Second World War. In Afghanistan, unexploded mines, which were veritable time bombs, were machines for producing disabilities and mutilations. The situation was even more serious in Afghanistan because medical treatment was practically non-existent and persons suffering from a disability were mired in absolute poverty because villages had been bombed and the destruction of the family environment had deprived them of their natural source of protection. Although the conflict had ended, reconstruction was very difficult. The situation was disastrous, not only from a physical and ecological standpoint, but from a psychological point of view. Women in particular, who had lost children or husbands, felt psychologically disabled, and disabled children needed special care.

62. In the adoption of instruments concerning the rights of children or the disabled, the special needs of the least developed countries must be taken into account. Such countries as Cambodia, Angola or Afghanistan, which had been devastated by conflicts, belonged to that group. Furthermore, any agenda for development must consider the care to be provided to persons disabled from mine explosions. In general, he felt that the developed countries were totally unaware of the situation in countries like Afghanistan. It also seemed that rules formulated in international forums - the Standard Rules for the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, for example - applied more to developed countries than to countries like Afghanistan or Cambodia. Any draft resolution on that issue should mention financial assistance to be provided to the least developed countries, which must meet the immense needs of a large disabled population.

63. At a previous meeting, he had listened attentively to the comments of the representative of Denmark, who had said that donor countries were ready to provide assistance for disabled persons, but that there had been no interest in the offer. He assured him that Afghanistan would be very happy to benefit from such assistance.

64. Mrs. FERTEKLIGIL (Turkey) drew attention to the social problems experienced by the international community and emphasized the correlation between economic and social development and peace and security. Persistent economic imbalances and social regression could create political tensions that threatened peace and stability. In that regard, appropriate mechanisms must be established and effective action undertaken in order to meet the challenges being faced at the end of the twentieth century, in terms of poverty, unemployment and social and economic inequality.

65. Economic growth by itself could not, however, guarantee sustainable development and must be backed up by strategies, policies and rules encouraging social integration, particularly with respect to disadvantaged groups. In that context, Turkey welcomed the convening of a World Summit for Social Development. She reiterated her country's support for the Summit and said she was convinced that it would impart new momentum to social development.

(Mrs. Fertekligil, Turkey)

66. Turkey hoped that the Summit would result in concrete actions that would make it possible to reverse current negative trends and to fill in the widening gap between rich and poor. She emphasized that a great deal of creativity and boldness would be needed to arrive at decisions that would be commensurate with the heightened expectations attaching to the three core issues which the Summit would address, namely, enhancement of social integration, alleviation and reduction of poverty and expansion of productive employment. Turkey was determined to contribute actively to the success of preparations for the Summit and of the Summit itself.

67. She also stressed the appropriateness of creating a trust fund for the Summit, which would facilitate both the holding of the Summit and the participation of the least developed countries.

68. As a country which found itself in the midst of social change, Turkey was endeavouring to adopt measures that would improve the quality of life of its population by guaranteeing equal opportunities for social advancement, employment and access to health services. To that end, Turkey was engaged in mobilizing the resources necessary for economic growth that would be both sustainable and rational in social and ecological terms. The Turkish authorities were giving considerable attention to social integration and were concentrating their efforts, inter alia, on the family as a basic unit of society, youth, the elderly and women. Policies and programmes had also been formulated for the integration of disabled people into society.

69. In accordance with its social policy, Turkey supported all the programmes of action initiated by the United Nations with a view to enhancing social integration, particularly of the more disadvantaged groups. In that connection, Turkey welcomed the observance in 1994 of the International Year of the Family. She also welcomed such initiatives as the International Plan of Action on Ageing, the draft Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and the observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

70. Turkey noted the importance of the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993, the observance of the International Year of the Family and the holding of the International Conference on Population and Development, which would take place during 1994, and the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, to take place in 1995. Those events would make it possible to maintain a spirit of solidarity and to achieve the goals which the international community had set for itself in the field of social development.

71. Mrs. RAOELINA (Madagascar) said that the economic crisis affecting a large part of the world was taking a very high social and human toll, and for that reason the core issues to be addressed during the World Summit for Social Development, namely, the efforts to combat marginalization in all its forms, poverty, and unemployment and underemployment, were particularly relevant. Madagascar welcomed the progress made in the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Summit.

(Mrs. Raoelina, Madagascar)

72. Despite its return to democracy and its reorientation towards a market economy, Madagascar was experiencing an economic and social crisis. Nevertheless, it had taken an active part in combating poverty and in efforts to improve the living conditions of its citizens. Special mention should be made of the SECALINE pilot project for food security and improved diet, which had been implemented in two disadvantaged regions in the centre and south of the country and served more than 2 million people. That project, which focused on improving the diet of malnourished children and at the same time sought to provide employment for some of the poorest people, was intended to serve as a foundation for a true national food-security strategy. The project was the product of a collaborative effort between the Government of Madagascar, the World Bank, Japan, UNICEF and non-governmental organizations. The results would be evaluated and monitored regularly by the donors.

73. Afflicted with poverty and illiteracy, lagging in the health field and facing the serious problem of external debt, Madagascar nevertheless remained a country well-endowed with natural resources, population and the good will of other nations and the international community. In an interdependent world, international cooperation and solidarity were indispensable.

74. The concept of social development was founded on the basic idea that a country's security could also be measured by the degree of its economic development and by progress made by it in improving the living conditions of its citizens. Social development also aimed to "humanize" the logic of the market by focusing economic development on the human being. It emphasized the essential solidarity among the nations of the South, buffeted by the same economic disasters, and between the developing nations of the South and the rich nations of the North, which themselves were passing through a period of recession. The joint struggle against poverty, marginalization and unemployment went hand in hand with a need for greater justice in international economic and financial relations and in people's living conditions.

75. Madagascar believed that the questions to be discussed during the World Summit and the underlying issues at stake were of vital importance and were worthy of at least the beginnings of a response from the international community. She hoped that those questions would not be overshadowed by the pressing concerns of that moment.

76. Ms. Al-Hamami (Yemen), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

77. Mrs. MBIMBI (Angola) said that the human and social development situation was nowhere so serious as in Africa, where productivity had continued to decline by an average of 1.5 per cent per year while increasing by an average of 1.2 per cent per year in the Western countries. The result had been a growing impoverishment of the population, over half of which lived under the poverty line. The situation had deteriorated particularly in social investment, especially in education, nutrition, health and housing. The infant mortality rate in Africa was 10 times higher than in the industrialized countries. The average African was poorer today than in 1981. More than 60 per cent of adults were illiterate. The socio-economic crisis was made worse by natural disasters and the lack of adequate economic infrastructures, to say nothing of the

(Mrs. Mbimbi, Angola)

conflicts that had been responsible for 6 million refugees and 12 million displaced persons, the majority of them women and children.

78. In his introductory statement, the Chief of the Development Analysis Branch, Mr. Uswatte-Aratchi, had cited Angola as an example of a country where the Government had failed to intervene in the field of social development. Her delegation considered that to be a very unfortunate assessment. Everyone was aware that social development was intrinsically linked to peace and security. Everyone was also aware that Angola was at war, a war in which children, the ageing and women were the main victims. That war had already taken the lives of more than 120,000 people since its resumption by UNITA in September 1992. It might be asked whether it was possible for a Government to intervene in the field of social development in such circumstances.

79. Her delegation attached great importance to the international conferences scheduled for the next few years, in particular the World Summit for Social Development, which the Government of Denmark had offered to host in March 1995. She noted in that connection that the conceptual bases for the Summit were in the Charter of the United Nations, which stated in Article 55 that the United Nations should promote "higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development".

80. Mr. OJHA (Nepal) emphasized the need for a holistic approach to social problems, given the fact that social, economic and demographic aspects of development were interlinked. He noted with satisfaction that the human being and the family were the focus of attention in all development strategies devised by the United Nations and the international community.

81. His delegation endorsed the core issues spelled out in General Assembly resolution 47/92 on the convening of a World Summit for Social Development. The resolution called for particular attention to be given to the needs of the least developed countries in combating poverty, unemployment and social and environmental degradation. Nepal, as a least developed country, welcomed that initiative.

82. Given the changes in the world situation since the late 1980s and the deterioration in social problems such as poverty, disease, unemployment and illiteracy, the three core issues on which the World Summit would be focusing its deliberations - enhancement of social integration, particularly of the most disadvantaged groups, alleviation and reduction of poverty and expansion of productive employment - were particularly relevant. In that context, the role of the non-governmental organizations should be strengthened at the grass-roots level and the private sector should be encouraged to participate in the development of the social sector.

83. His delegation welcomed the inclusion of a chapter on the rights of disabled persons in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in June 1993, which called upon the General Assembly to adopt the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. It also looked forward to participating in the forthcoming International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 as well as the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in 1995, two meetings

(Mr. Ojha, Nepal)

which would be taking up the major social issues of the day. There was a need to devise integrated development strategies and a suitable mechanism at both the national and international levels for fostering international cooperation. He supported the organizational changes in the United Nations Secretariat in the social sector.

84. In Nepal, as part of the process of consolidating and institutionalizing democracy, which had been restored in 1990, social policies had been adopted giving priority to drinking water, health care, education and rural development. A large portion of the annual budget was allocated to improving the living conditions of the rural poor and to the active participation of women in the development process. Given the goals involved, namely political freedom, economic liberalization and the social uplifting of the rural poor, special attention was given to the promotion of social integration, poverty alleviation and the introduction of employment for youth.

85. The Government of Nepal was making plans to celebrate the International Year of the Family in 1994. As a member State of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), it was implementing various social sector programmes under the Integrated Programme of Action. In the eighth annual development plan, priority had been given to the education of girls.

86. Socio-economic development depended largely on the practice of more liberal international economic policies, North-South dialogue and South-South cooperation; it also required better international understanding and cooperation.

87. Mr. AL-TAEE (Oman) said that the family should be the basis for development and welcomed the interest shown by the international community in social and family issues. He drew attention to a UNICEF report entitled "Progress of Nations" published in September 1993, which stated that Oman was in first place among the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, and in second place at the world level, with regard to the drop in the infant mortality rate among children under five years of age.

88. Oman gave priority in its development programmes to the training of young people in order to enable them to participate effectively in the development process and in building a new world order on the basis of United Nations principles.

89. Oman also attached great importance to the ageing, applying the noble teachings of Islam and the fundamental principles of Arab civilization, which recommended respect for the ageing. Omani society and families venerated the ageing for their skills and the service they had rendered; as for the Government of Oman, it was convinced that the ageing were entitled to lead a decent life after their retirement. It therefore made every effort to meet physical and psychological needs of the ageing through a social security system aimed at improving their living conditions and guaranteeing an equitable distribution of the advantages of development among all the members of society.

(Mr. Al-Taee, Oman)

90. The human being was the main target of development. It was therefore essential to care for disabled persons and to focus on their rehabilitation thus enabling them to participate in the development process. In that regard, Oman had launched training, orientation and job programmes for disabled persons, while there were fixed quotas under Omani legislation for the employment of disabled persons. The competent public authorities did their utmost to ensure participation in cultural, social and sporting activities for the disabled. Disabled persons with no vocational training and the fully disabled jobless were covered by social security.

91. Mrs. AL-ALAWI (Bahrain) said that development aims could not be achieved unless social measures were taken. Accordingly, the social and economic plans implemented by Bahrain were based on fundamental principles, such as the importance of supplementary activities carried out by all sectors engaged in social and economic development work. Those plans involved all social groups, particularly youth, the disabled and the elderly.

92. Bahrain paid particular attention to the elderly on the basis that they had devoted a considerable effort to establishing the rules and principles on which society was built. In turn, therefore, society should take the utmost care of the elderly, address itself to solving their problems and provide for their needs in accordance with the noble precepts of Islam and humanitarian principles.

93. The General Assembly decision to make 1994 the International Year of the Family provided a good opportunity for increasing awareness in that area. Bahrain gave particular attention to the family, which was the nucleus of society; on that aspect, it applied the principles of the Shariah, which governed all aspects of family life. In addition, Bahrain had taken all steps to safeguard the welfare and cohesion of the family, thereby enabling it to contribute to the development of society and providing it with social and economic stability and security.

94. The General Assembly's adoption of resolution 47/92 on the convening of a world summit for social development in early 1995 clearly demonstrated the interest and concerns of the international community on that subject. Bahrain very much hoped that the summit would produce an agreement related to achieving the aims set forth in article 55 of the Charter.

95. Mr. Kukan (Slovakia) resumed the Chair.

96. Mrs. OLSZOWSKI (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that the Third Committee discussions revealed a general recognition of the world-wide accentuation of social problems and the need to rethink development, which, according to the Director-General of UNESCO, Federico Mayor, required a global struggle against all the forms of exclusion - beginning with poverty - by developing human resources and productive employment.

(Mrs. Olszowski, UNESCO)

97. By intending to focus debate at the World Summit for Social Development on the three core issues of social cohesion, poverty and employment, the international community had acknowledged the need for policies which integrated political, economic, social and environmental factors and placed people directly at the centre of development. In that respect, the recent high segment of the Economic and Social Council had demonstrated a wide degree of consensus in the analysis and prognosis of the current world situation. It also believed that all countries needed a new direction in their social policies.

98. One question which arose was whether the United Nations system could help to devise an integrated approach to policy-making and to build consensus on that matter without impinging on national prerogatives.

99. UNESCO planned to contribute to the aims of the World Summit, to a more informed discourse on social policies and to a conceptual and methodological framework in that area within the United Nations system. The fruits of the two high-level commissions - the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, chaired by Mr. Jacques Delors, and the World Commission on Culture and Development, presided over by Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar - would be one of its contributions to the preparatory process of the Summit and the ensuing activities. The International Commission on Education focused on the goal of instilling modern societies with values such as tolerance, respect and understanding of cultural differences, which were crucial to building a more just world and achieving social integration. The Commission was also concerned with problems of marginalization and with the participation of individuals and groups in a pluralist society where work would occupy an increasingly less important part of individual life. The World Commission on Culture regarded culture, in its widest sense, as both the major means to development and as its ultimate goal. Culture had become a prerequisite for peace and security; the Commission was therefore entrusted with an unprecedented task of critical importance, namely the comprehensive and coordinated study on a world scale of the relationship between culture and development.

100. UNESCO's programme for the next biennium (1994-1995) consisted of other initiatives aimed at strengthening multilateral cooperation in the area of social development. The Social Science Programme on the Management of Social Transformation (MOST) was to be approved by the General Conference of UNESCO, which was currently in session in Paris. The research undertaken in the context of that Programme should provide policy makers with the knowledge necessary for decision-making.

101. Another interdisciplinary and inter-agency cooperation project entitled "Environment and population education, and information for human development" was also included in the 1994-1995 Programme and reinforced the activities undertaken by UNESCO, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Population Fund, in the context of Education for All by the Year 2000. UNESCO believed that the promotion of that goal was a precondition for achieving development which was "sustainable, equitable and people-centred", and for achieving "peace based on human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy".

(Mrs. Olszowski, UNESCO)

102. UNESCO's educational programmes were designed to equalize opportunities for disabled persons, another issue which had been the focus of the Committee's debates on the eve of the adoption of the standard rules in that regard. The day of 3 December, proclaimed by the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly as the International Day of Disabled Persons, was to be celebrated at UNESCO in Paris. UNESCO would also celebrate the International Year of the Family, to which preparation it had contributed.

103. On issues such as the relationship between State and civilian society, urban marginality and the social integration of marginalized groups, and population trends and migrations, UNESCO was, within its field of competence, paying particular attention to the specific problems related to the participation of youth and women in development. UNESCO's promotional activities for human rights and democracy were also linked to development, those three concepts being interdependent. Furthermore, science and communication were contributing to the transfer of knowledge and technology, to national capacity-building and to other important components of sustainable human development.

104. Finally, she indicated to the Committee members that the undertakings proposed by UNESCO in connection with the preparations for the World Summit, particularly in the field of information, were the subject of an information note which was at their disposal.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.